



# TROJAN TODAY

YOUR SCHOOL TOWN OF HIGHLAND SOURCE FOR NEWS AND EVENTS | FEBRUARY-MARCH 2020

## Highland graduation rates rebound



Highland is bucking the trend with high school graduation rates bumping up while statewide stats of those receiving diplomas fell.

Superintendent Brian Smith is thrilled with the turnaround.

“These numbers show we continue to prepare all of our students for life after high school – whether that is in the work force, military or college,” Smith said. “We are pleased with the numbers, but continue working to develop new strategies to get the graduation rates even higher.”

According to the Anne E. Casey Foundation, issues that lead to students opting out of public schools without a diploma can begin in the early years.

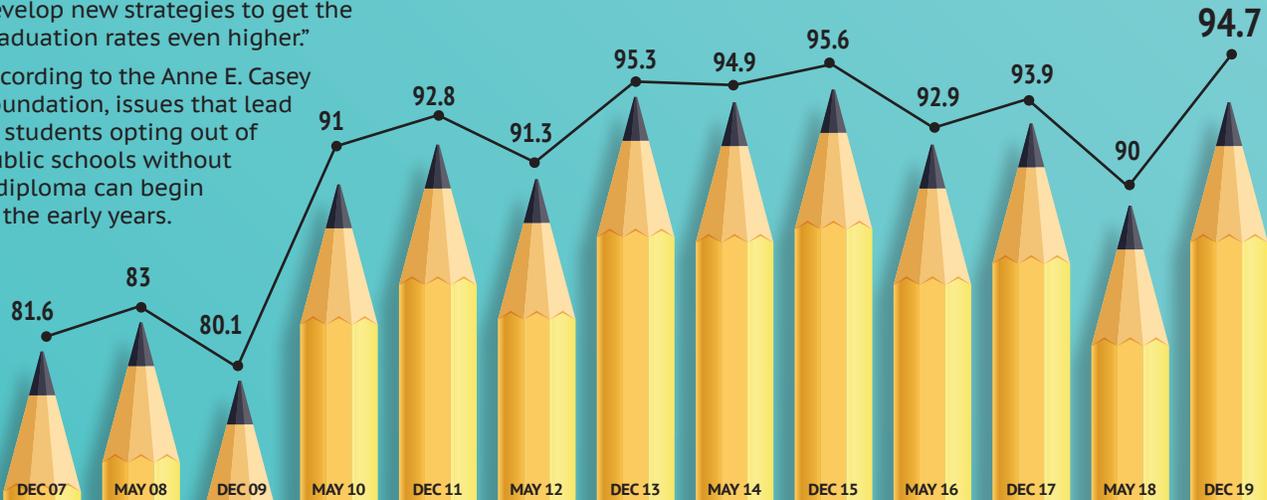
Research shows children who are not reading proficiently by fourth grade are four times more likely to quit high school than their peers.

“It’s not just reading, either,” Smith said. “Attendance, and signs a student is struggling in any core subject, is cause for concern. Our teachers, counselors and principals are always on the lookout for signs a student is struggling and take steps to intervene.” ❖

### BY THE NUMBERS ...

Highland High School’s graduation rates jumped to 94.7 percent in December 2019 after a dip to 90 percent in May 2018.

Outpacing the state’s 87.3 percent graduation rate, a whopping 30.5 percent of Highland seniors graduate with honors while 60.2 percent receive a Core 40 diploma and 9.3 percent opt for a general diploma.



SOURCE: Indiana Department of Education

## Dewey named Highland’s fourth Lilly scholar in 5 years

Inspiration struck Brianna Dewey while she was just an eighth grader.

It was a module explaining astronomy and its relationship to math that led the high school senior and Highland’s most recent Lilly Scholar to dedicate her academic pursuits to physics.

“I’ve been going to STEM workshops since elementary school,” Dewey said. “I also attended camps at the University of Chicago and University of Michigan along with Saturday physics classes at Fermi Lab to learn more.

“Last summer, it was a physics camp at Notre Dame,” she said. “The end of the lecture was dedicated to the application of nuclear physics

and antiproton therapy for the treatment of cancer and the possibilities just blew my mind.”

Science aside, Dewey has made a name for herself as one of the nicest, most engaged members of the student body.

She is a soccer goalie, Girl Scout, captain of the Science Olympiad team, a member of Girls Who Code as well as the National Honor Society, founder of a start-up tutoring program and participated as a Best Buddy.

The Lilly Endowment Community Scholarship allows Dewey to attend any Indiana college or university – at no cost – and includes \$900 per year for required books and equipment. ❖



## ADMINISTRATION

**Brian Smith**  
Superintendent  
bsmith@highland.k12.in.us

**Dr. Sherri L. Mitchell**  
Asst. Superintendent of Curriculum  
Instruction & Student Services  
smitchel@highland.k12.in.us

**Cindy Adams**  
Chief Financial Officer  
cadams@highland.k12.in.us

**Lisa Hayes**  
Food Service Administrator  
lhayes@highland.k12.in.us

**Kristy Elsey**  
Special Education Director  
kelsey@highland.k12.in.us

**Mike Sukta**  
Facilities Manager  
msukta@highland.k12.in.us

**Norbert Schlessler**  
Transportation Manager  
nsshless@highland.k12.in.us

**Dr. Patrick Weil**  
Highland High School Principal  
pweil@highland.k12.in.us

**Justin Fronek**  
Highland Middle School Principal  
jfronek@highland.k12.in.us

**Ryan Erdelac**  
Johnston Elementary Principal  
rerdelac@highland.k12.in.us

**Eric McMahon**  
Merkley Elementary Principal  
emcmahon@highland.k12.in.us

**Roy Hufford**  
Southridge Elementary Principal  
rhufford@highland.k12.in.us

**Christina Davis**  
Warren Elementary Principal  
cdavis@highland.k12.in.us

## SCHOOL BOARD

**Luanne Jurczak**, President

**Robert Kuva**, Vice President

**Carol Green Fraley**, Secretary

**Victor A. Garcia**, Member

**Patrick Krull**, Member

The school board meets the third Tuesday of the month at 6 p.m. in the Administration Building, 9145 Kennedy Avenue, Highland.

**INFO:** Visit [hhs.highland.k12.in.us](https://hhs.highland.k12.in.us) for the latest information, including meeting agendas, school policies, board mission, beliefs and values.



## LETTER FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

## *“Respond to the 2020 Census and inform funding for educational programs that benefit our children”*



If you haven't received information about the 2020 Census yet, get ready. A blitz to get a complete count of Highland will begin in mid-March and continue until every form is filled out and tabulated.

We have a team at the schools that is already working with the town to help guarantee every person is counted.

Some programs we have on tap include:

- ✓ Teaching grade-appropriate modules on the census and why it matters.
- ✓ Showing students how to access the census online on their iPads.
- ✓ Making our media centers available for Highland residents who would prefer to fill out their census forms through the school computer system. Dates and times will be announced.

The percentage of Highland residents who are counted matters more than most of us realize. Every person who isn't counted means less dollars from the federal government for education in our town.

Please make it your mission in April to stand up and be counted! ❖

United States<sup>®</sup>  
**Census**  
**2020**

### DID YOU KNOW?

In addition to determining how many representatives Indiana has in Congress, census counts are the basis for distributing \$675 billion in federal funds that support schools, hospitals and fire departments.

If Highland is undercounted, the town and its schools will receive less money for our students and programs that support them.

By responding to the 2020 Census, you can help inform funding for after-school activities, school meal programs and Head Start. It's your opportunity to shape the next generation.

**INFO:** To learn more about the 2020 Census and how it can shape our future, visit [census.gov](https://census.gov).

**Brian Smith**  
Superintendent  
School Town of Highland

**"Leah is a prime example of what working hard and dreaming big can achieve. I would like for all student athletes at Highland to follow her lead."**

Athletic Director Ryan Harrington



## Women's state wrestling champ looks forward to another year of competition

When it comes to wrestling, Leah Bishop is in a class all her own.

After placing as a runner-up in state two years in a row, Leah registered three back-to-back pins to bring home the state title in her bracket in January.

She isn't done. The high school junior still has another year to compete before heading off to college, where she plans to wrestle and study kinesiology and athletic training.

College scouts are already knocking at her door, but she's not in any rush.

"I'm enjoying the moments. Now, that the season is over, I'm still wrestling with the varsity boys team and coaching younger kids that are part of Highland's wrestling club," she said.

"Wrestling is considered an individual sport, but I know I'm better because of this group of wrestlers who are really more like a talented group of big brothers who are always working to help me be better." ❖



### TROJAN WRESTLING

Since Chris Kirincic came to Highland six years ago, the wrestling program has seen success and participation increase – from elementary through high school.

"Our kids are excited," Kirincic (above left) said. "Because of the support of our parents and the community, Highland wrestling continues to grow."

**INFO:** For more information about the Highland Wrestling Club, email [highland.wrestling@yahoo.com](mailto:highland.wrestling@yahoo.com) or visit the Highland Wrestling Club Facebook page @HighlandWrestlingClub.

## Time to register Highland children for kindergarten

The public elementary schools will hold kindergarten registration the week of March 16. Parents are urged to bring their children and the items listed below to the school that serves their neighborhood according to the following schedule:

**8:45 – 11 AM:**  
Last names "K" through "Z"

**12:15 – 2:30 PM:**  
Last names "A" through "J"

**MONDAY, MARCH 16**  
Southridge Elementary School  
9221 Johnston St. • (219) 922-5650

**TUESDAY, MARCH 17**  
Johnston Elementary School  
8220 Fifth St. • (219) 923-2428

**WEDNESDAY, MARCH 18**  
Merkley Elementary School  
9340 Fifth St. • (219) 922-5640

**THURSDAY, MARCH 19**  
Warren Elementary School  
2901 100th St. • (219) 922-5660

### AGE REQUIREMENT

Students must be 5 years of age on or before Aug. 1, 2020.

### ITEMS FOR REGISTRATION:

- Five proofs of residency**  
Two of the following:  
NIPSCO, water, phone, cable (utility bills/deposit receipts)  
Two of the following: Driver's license/state ID showing current address, vehicle registration, recent paycheck/unemployment check receipt.  
One of the following: Lease or rent receipt, mortgage or homeowners insurance documents, notarized letter with three proofs of residency from the homeowner (parent/guardian must provide ID listed above)
- Proof of custody**, if applicable
- Birth certificate**
- Social security number**
- Current immunization records** (name and phone number of pediatrician)

30TH ANNUAL DINNER

THE HIGHLAND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT COUNCIL

INVITES YOU TO A ...

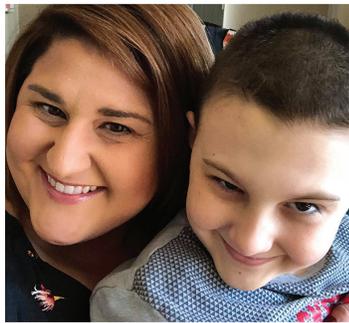
SPAGHETTI DINNER FUNDRAISER

HIGHLAND HIGH SCHOOL CAFETERIA



TICKETS ARE \$7 PER PERSON

FRIDAY FEB 28 4:30-6:30 PM



<< Max Cash pictured with his mom Janelle

DINNER TO BENEFIT SOUTHRIDGE STUDENT

Highland High School's Student Council is prepping for this year's spaghetti supper extravaganza and planning for another great turnout.

Amici's donates most of the food – which includes salad, spaghetti with marinara sauce, garlic knots and chocolate cake.

The spaghetti dinner is an all-local event. High school students provide the entertainment, the Southridge Student Council will host a bake sale and local merchants donate items for the silent auction. Carry outs are available.

Student Council Advisor Brenda Richardson said the event raises about \$5,000 every year.

Proceeds will go to the Cash family. Southridge third grader Max Cash has a rare genetic condition known as Fanconi Anemia, which requires transplants of donated bone marrow. In Max's case, his mother Janelle is able to be the donor.

"I want to thank the Highland community for everything they are doing for us. It's easy sometimes to feel isolated," she said. "This makes us realize we aren't alone." ❖

MARCH PERFORMANCES

Join us as we celebrate spring's arrival with the voices of our high school and middle school choirs as well as instrumentals of our middle school orchestra. Admission is free.

HS CHOIR: 6:30 p.m. March 10

MS ORCHESTRA: 6:30 p.m. March 12

MS CHOIR: 6:30 March 17

WHERE: Monbeck Auditorium at Highland High School, 9135 Erie St.

SPRING CRAFT SHOW

Join us for our annual Band Spring Arts & Crafts Show. All proceeds benefit the band department.

ARTS: 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. April 4

WHERE: Highland Middle School, 2941 41st Street

SPRING MATTRESS SALE

The choir, band, orchestra and theater students are hosting a mattress sale to raise funds for the fine arts department.

ARTS: 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. April 4

WHERE: High school gymnasium

TRIVIA NIGHT

Join the Highland Education Foundation for its fourth annual Trivia Night, sponsored by Highland Parks and Recreation. Put a team together and take the trophy away from E=MC Hammer, who will attempt to retain their championship.

WHEN: 6-10 p.m. April 4

WHERE: Lincoln Community Center

TICKETS: \$35 includes pizza, wine and beer along with your tournament play. Tables of eight are available at a \$280 or \$270 before March 20.

INFO: For more info or sponsorship opportunities, contact Foundation President Judi Caddick at (219) 923-7621 or hefdnevents@gmail.com.

NO WINTER THEATER

Please note that there will be no Highland Theatre Company winter production because of lighting work in the auditorium. We look forward to seeing you when we return for our spring musical in May. Stay tuned!

INFO: Check for updates on Facebook @highlandtheatrecompany.